

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /038 W

-----161021Z 060818 /21

R 170856Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9345

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL IBDAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, NI

SUBJECT: OBSERVANCES OF FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF MURTALA'S DEATH

REF: KADUNA 0155 (NOTAL)

1. OBSERVANCES OF FIRST ANNIVERSARY (FEBRUARY 13) OF ASSASSINATION OF HEAD OF STATE MURTALA MUHAMMED HAVE BEEN GENERALLY QUIET. CHIEF OF STAFF YAR'ADUA ATTENDED PRAYERS AT CENTRAL MOSQUE, LAGOS, AS DID FAMILY OF LATE HEAD OF STATE. BENDEL STATE GOVERNOR UNVEILED MONUMENT TO MUHAMMED IN BENIN CITY. THERE SEEM TO HAVE BEEN NO LENGTHY PRONOUNCEMENTS BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS; COMMENTARIES IN NEWSPAPERS STRESS MUHAMMED'S ROLE AS DISCIPLINARIAN WHO FOUGHT INTERNAL NIGERIAN VICES OF CORRUPTION AND APATHY. HIS SUPPORT FOR MPLA GETS MENTION BUT NOT GREAT EMPHASIS. EDITORIALS AND GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASES HAVE NOT RPT NOT REVIVED CHARGES OF FOREIGN COMPLICITY IN LAST YEAR'S COUP ATTEMPT AND ASSASSINATION.

2. STUDENTS HELD PROCESSIONS IN LAGOS, IBADAN AND KADUNA (REFTEL), APPARENTLY WITHOUT INCIDENT. VARIOUS COMMEMORATIVE SEMINARS HEARD PAPERS ON "THE IMPERIALIST POLITICS OF ASSASSINATION -- LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LESSONS FOR AFRICA," AND DANGERS OF RESURGENT "GOWONISM." HISTORY LECTURER AND FORMER STUDENT ACTIVIST SHEHU UMAR ABDULLAHI, SPEAKING AT BAYERO UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, KANO, CALLED FOR IMMEDIATE BREAK OF TIES WITH BRITAIN, CLOSURE OF BRITISH COUNCIL, USIS AND ITT "BRANCHES IN THE COUNTRY," AND DISMISSAL OF BRITISH INSTRUCTORS AT JAJI STAFF COLLEGE -- HE SUGGESTED CUBANS AND YUGOSLAVS AS THEIR REPLACEMENTS.

3. ANNIVERSARY SEEMS TO HAVE SPAWNED AT LEAST ONE IDEA THAT COULD DISCOMFIT FMG: NEED TO REASSIGN ALL STATE GOVERNORS. WARNING THAT PROLONGING STAY OF GOVERNORS MIGHT BRING BACK "GOWONISM," STUDENTS UNION AT BAYERO UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CALLED ON FMG REASSIGN THEM ALL IMMEDIATELY. ABDULLAHI REPEATED DEMAND IN HIS LECTURE ON SAME CAMPUS. THEN ON FEBRUARY 15, /NEW NIGERIA/ FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL, CITING "DRIFT TO THE DAYS WHEN STATES WERE RUN AS THOUGH THEY WERE PRIVATE FIEFDOMS," ALSO CAME OUT FOR CHANGE IN GOVERNORS. "REASSIGNMENTS, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE BUDGETS HAVE BEEN PRESENTED AND APPROVED, WOULD BE IN ORDER. CERTAINLY, THEY WOULD BE VERY MUCH DESIRABLE IN SOME STATES. WHATEVER HAPPENS, NO GOVERNOR SHOULD STAY IN OFFICE FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS."

4. COMMENT: SOME LONG-TIME OBSERVERS OF NIGERIAN SCENE BELIEVE THE SIGNS POINT TO A MAJOR SHUFFLE OF GOVERNORS. THEY NOTE THAT TODAY'S GOVERNORS ARE NOT POLICY MAKERS AS THEY WERE UNDER GOWON BUT RATHER ARE EXECUTORS OF POLICY LAID DOWN BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN LAOS. THEY OFTEN FIND THEMSELVES IN COMPETITION WITH AMBITIOUS AND CAPABLE SMG'S, SOME OF WHOM ARE LOOKING TOWARD THE END OF MILITARY RULE OR BUILDING THEIR OWN POWER BASES. IN FRUSTRATION AND IN REALIZATION THAT THEY CANNOT EFFECTIVELY CARRY OUT CENTRAL DIRECTIVES, SOME GOVERNORS HAVE BECOME ANTAGONISTS OF SMGS. RULING SMC MAY FEEL THAT IT MUST NOW MOVE GOVERNORS IN ORDER AVOID MORE SERIOUS MILITARY-CIVILIAN SPLITS. WE WOULD NOTE THAT MUHAMMED/OBASANJO ADMINISTRATION HAS ALWAYS MAINTAINED THAT ASSIGNMENT AS GOVERNOR IS NOT PERMANENT, BUT RATHER SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS ONE ASSIGN-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MENT IN A MAN'S MILITARY CAREER.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Message ID: 63a717c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 KADUNA 155
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3298236
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OBSERVANCES OF FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF MURTALA'S DEATH
TAGS: PINS, PFOR, NI, (MOHAMMED, MURTALA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/63a717c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009